

REMARKS

Claims 5, 8, 13-14, and 28 are pending. Claim 28 has been added. Claims 5, 8, and 13-14 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application are respectfully requested.

In the June 1, 2007 Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 5, 8, 13, and 14 under 35 U. S. C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Thorn, U.S. Patent No. 4,329,827 (hereinafter Thorn). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections in view of the claims, as amended.

Independent claim 5, as amended recites:

A hollow panel comprising:  
first hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane and having a first width; and  
second hollow portions arranged in the substantially same plane and having a second width different from the first width, wherein the hollow panel includes a pair of flat outer sides which are substantially parallel to each other and ***the pair of flat outer sides of the hollow panel and partition walls between the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are made of a same material of wood elements.***

The Thorn reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 5, as amended. Unlike the hollow panel specified in claim 5, Thorn does not teach a hollow panel “wherein ***the pair of flat outer sides of the hollow panel and partition walls between the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are made of a same material of wood elements.***”

Thorn is directed to a roofing element for the construction of roofs for factory buildings. (*Thorn; Col. 1, lines 5-10*) Thorn discloses roofing elements including webs 4 made of a fibrous wood-based material and a flange 5 made of wood. (*Thorn; Col 2, lines 26-27*) Thorn also discloses an upper skin 1 made of plywood and a lower skin 2 made of a thin gauge steel or metal plate. Thorn teaches that the metallic layer is important for purposes of fireproofing.

(*Thorn, Col. 1, lines 40-60*) Thorn specifically teaches that one of the deficiencies of prior art

hollow all wood structures is that such structures lack fireproofing. (*Thorn, Col. 1, lines 21-29*)

In fact, Thorn states that “A roof constructed of elements according to the invention must be covered by a protective layer, such as roofing felt, plastic or sheet metal.” (*Thorn; Col. 3, lines 12-14, emphasis added*) Thereafter, Thorn reiterates the importance of fire protection stating “The roof is protected against fire by the metal sheeting at its underside, and this sheeting also forms an effective barrier against the diffusion into the element of humidity.” As such, Thorn teaches away from a hollow panel “wherein ***the pair of flat outer sides of the hollow panel and partition walls between the first hollow portions and the second hollow portions are made of a same material of wood elements.***” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 5, as amended, distinguishes over Thorn.

New claim 28 recites limitations similar to those in independent claim 5, as amended.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 28 distinguishes over Thorn for reasons similar to those set forth above with respect to independent claim 5, as amended.

**Independent claim 8, as amended recites:**

A hollow panel comprising:

first hollow portions arranged in a substantially same plane and having a first width; and second hollow portions arranged in the substantially same plane and having a second width different from the first width, wherein

a rod-like member is disposed at a part of the first and second hollow portions, the rod-like member having a section shape which substantially corresponds to a section shape of the part of the first and second hollow portions,

the hollow panel includes a pair of flat outer sides which are substantially parallel to each other, and the at least one of the first hollow portions and at least one of the second hollow portions into which the solid portion forming member is not inserted, and

***the first hollow portions have a depth substantially corresponding to a depth of the second hollow portions.***

The Thorn reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest the hollow panel specified in independent claim 8, as amended. Unlike the hollow panel specified in claim 8, Thorn does not

teach a hollow panel “*the first hollow portions have a depth substantially corresponding to a depth of the second hollow portions.*”

The Examiner identifies a cavity adjacent the element number 2, and a cavity between element numbers 4 of FIG. 5 of the Thorn reference as a first hollow portion and a second hollow portion, respectively. However, the identified cavities do not have a substantially corresponding depth. Thus, Thorn fails to disclose, teach, or suggest hollow panel “*the first hollow portions have a depth substantially corresponding to a depth of the second hollow portions.*” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 8, as amended, distinguishes over Thorn.

Independent claims 13, 14, and 28 recite similar limitations to those in independent claim 8, as amended. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 13, 14 and 28 distinguish over Thorn for reasons similar to those set forth above with respect to independent claim 8, as amended.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants believe that the claims are in condition for allowance. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference call would advance prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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